



## ***EPA Begins Demolition and Cleanup at the Rogers Fibre Mill Site 13.5***

### ***Overview***

The Rogers Fibre Mill Site is located in a residential neighborhood on Depot Street in Bar Mills, Maine. Approximately 57 homes and an elementary school are located within a quarter of a mile.

The dilapidated building on the site was used by the Rogers Fibre Co. to manufacture fiberboards from 1917 to 1980. This company merged with Colonial Board Company in 1967 and was known from that point on as CBC's Rogers Fibre Division.

The one to three story building is over 100 years old and sits along the Saco River shoreline. A sluiceway flows underneath a portion of the building that extends over the river. Portions of the neglected building have collapsed, releasing some building materials into the river.

The Saco River is a Class A river under the Maine State Water Classification Program, which is rated a critical natural resource providing water suitable for



*A view of a collapsed portion of the mill building from Depot Street.*

drinking, fishing and swimming. Any discharges to the River must be equal to or of higher quality than the Saco River.

According to the Saco River Corridor Commission, the river supplies more than two billion gallons of drinking water annually to the cities and towns of Saco, Biddeford, Old Orchard Beach, Kennebunk, portions of Scarborough, and Kennebunkport. The river is also used for canoeing, fishing, and other recreational activities.

In addition, Central Maine Power operates a dam and hydroelectric plant immediately adjacent to the mill building.



*A view of the mill building from the hydroelectric dam.*

### ***What has EPA found at the site?***

In June, 1997, Senator Olympia J. Snowe contacted EPA to request a preliminary investigation of the old mill building on behalf of the municipalities that use the Saco River for drinking water. In September 1997, EPA investigators discovered asbestos-containing materials, several 55-gallon drums, metal and wooden tanks, and other containers within the building.

EPA sampling results from the investigation indicated asbestos concentrations of 95% in some materials present in the building. EPA also sampled the contents of drums and other containers and found elevated levels of volatile organic compounds

(VOCs).

These findings prompted EPA to initiate a cleanup of the site due to the significant human

health and environmental risks posed by the site.

EPA is particularly concerned that containers located within collapsed portions of the building could be damaged. These containers could release hazardous liquids into the river, threatening local drinking water supplies and river organisms; especially salmon and trout.

The Saco River Salmon Club (SRSC) annually stocks young salmon into the river's tributaries in an effort to restore Atlantic salmon to the Saco River watershed. In addition, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MEIF&W) stocks the Saco River with approximately 1,800 Brook and Brown Trout annually. Approximately 200 of these trout are stocked right next to the site at the Bar Mills Dam.

Trout and Salmon are quite sensitive to degraded water quality conditions; particularly juveniles. Although there is limited information available to determine the complete extent or magnitude of risks posed by the site to the fish populations, EPA is certain that a prompt cleanup of the contaminants onsite will greatly reduce risks posed by the site to the river's water quality.

### ***When and what does EPA plan to do in its cleanup effort?***

During the week of August 3, EPA will begin removing the hazardous substances and materials from the site, and demolish the entire mill building. Over the course of the next 8 months, and with the assistance of Senator Olympia Snowe's office; the town of Buxton; the Saco River Corridor Commission; the Maine Department of Environmental Protection;



*Looking inside the Rogers Fibre Mill building.*

and, Central Maine Power Company, EPA will:

- remove and dispose of all accessible asbestos-containing materials and drums/tanks;
- demolish the main mill building and dispose of the debris;
- inventory, sample, and analyze the contents of drums, tanks and other containers;

- dispose of all identified hazardous substances and contaminated materials at EPA-approved disposal facilities;
- sample and monitor water and sediments in the Saco River to ensure that the water quality is not affected by EPA's cleanup work; and,
- coordinate the temporary relocation of one family whose home is adjacent to the property.

### ***Recent Site Visit***

In early July, EPA officials participated in a tour of the site with Senator Snowe's office, town officials, and members of the press to discuss site conditions and EPA's preliminary plans for the cleanup.

In addition, on July 22, EPA presented a preliminary project strategy, including demolition and waste collection plans, and spill contingency plans. This strategy received



*Janis Tsang, EPA On-Scene Coordinator prepares for an interview with TV 13 News.*

unanimous approval from the Saco River Corridor Commission and the town of Buxton.

***How will the community be informed of activities at the site?***

In addition to newsletters and other correspondence via mail, EPA will canvass neighborhoods located near the site to inform residents of cleanup plans and address concerns they may have about the project.

EPA's On-Scene Coordinator, Janis Tsang is also available to answer questions or meet with residents at the site trailer, located directly across the street from the site, next to the Buxton Fire Station.

As the cleanup progresses, EPA may hold a public information meeting to update town residents and other interested parties about the project.



***If you have questions and/or concerns about the Rogers Fibre Mill Cleanup,***

**Stop by the site or call!**

**U.S. EPA**  
Janis Tsang, On-Scene  
Coordinator  
(617) 573-5732

Erin Heskett, Community  
Relations  
(617) 565-3033

1-888-372-7341 **EPA's  
toll free number is:**  
Just ask the receptionist for  
either Janis or Erin.

***Town of Buxton***  
Fred Farnham  
(207) 929-3046



***Further collapsing of the mill building could threaten the Saco River with potential releases of hazardous substances.***



***EPA and town officials gathered outside of the mill building to begin the site tour.***